Unit .21

Session .04

Jesus Teaches About Living Water

Scripture

John 4:7-14,19-26, 28-29,39

7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water. "Give me a drink," Jesus said to her, **8** because his disciples had gone into town to buy food. **9** "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" she asked him. For Jews do not associate with Samaritans. **10** Jesus answered, "If you knew the gift of God, and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would ask him, and he would give you living water." **11** "Sir," said the woman, "you don't even have a bucket, and the well is deep. So where do you get this 'living water'? **12** You aren't greater than our father Jacob, are you? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and livestock." **13** Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks from this water will get thirsty again. **14** But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again. In fact, the water I will give him will become a well of water springing up in him for eternal life." … **19** "Sir," the woman replied, "I see that you are a prophet. **20** Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem." **21** Jesus told her, "Believe me, woman, an hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. **22** You Samaritans worship what you do not know. We worship what we do know, because salvation is from the Jews. **23** But an hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. Yes, the Father wants such people to worship him. **24** God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and in truth." **25** The woman said to him, "I know that the Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will explain everything to us." **26** Jesus told her, "I, the one speaking to you, am he." … **28** Then the woman left her water jar, went into town, and told the people, **29** "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" … **39** Now many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of what the woman said when she testified, "He told me everything I ever did."

Intro Options

Main Point:
God's people worship in Spirit and in truth.

Option 1

Your students have been hired as consultants to one of the biggest corporations in the world (Amazon, Target, Wal-Mart). The corporation is looking for an edge over its competitors, and it thinks your students might have the brains and imagination to give it to them. They have three concepts, and they'd like your students to brainstorm prototype ideas:

Satisfaction-Guaranteer: they want some kind of product that will satisfy the wants and needs of its customers. Hunger, thirst, rest, relief: any desire in the world, they want this thing to be able to satisfy it.

Truth-Bringer: oriented toward the curious and philosophical consumer, this product will bring people to a knowledge of the truth. Whether it's what will happen in the next episode or finding out what a person is really thinking, this product will guide people to the truth.

Salvation-Deliverer: this product will solve problems and get people out of the binds they find themselves in. It'll probably be an AI, but it needs to be able to do everything from get people out of debt, find ways out to keep commitments, or even find a way to make it to work on time.

Let students work alone or in small groups. They should choose one of these concept ideas and develop an idea for it. Remember, the corporation is willing to give lots of money to this project, so students can dream big. They can diagram ideas on paper or write ideas out.

Debrief. Was this assignment difficult or easy? Why? Finding one thing that will handle all the complexities of life is difficult. Are we basically trying to find a way to be God? Our lesson today will look at how Jesus is the water that satisfies us, the prophet who shows us true worship, and the Messiah who brings us salvation. What people need most isn't another product: it's Jesus.

Option 2

Build-a-Bear is a company that specializes in making personalized stuffed animals; your students are to imagine that they have somehow found a strange, galactic power that allows them to build their own god (warn them that this idea might sound like blasphemy; remind them this is just an exercise, and ask them to hold judgment until you get through the entire thing). Their job, solo or in pairs, is to decide what they want their god to be like. Male, female, gracious, powerful, judgmental, benevolent, arbitrary, hands-off… how would we like God to be if we had a choice?

They should come up with five characteristics or actions of their "ideal" god. Then let them share their thoughts and explain them. For example, maybe they want God to be limited, so that he or she doesn't interfere in our business. Or maybe they want God to be totally forgiving, so we can do whatever.

Once students have shared, ask them what potential problems they see in the gods they've made. For instance, if they want God to be all-sweet, how is this God insufficient to deal with the horrible wickedness we see in the world? In today's lesson, we'll see a Samaritan woman who wanted Jesus simply to be her servant, giving her physical water and answering her intellectual questions. What she will get, though, is a far bigger God who demands more than she ever imagined.

TEACHING PLAN

Read John 4:7-14.

Jesus knew the Samaritan woman was in a state of separation from God because of her sin. Though she may not have realized it yet, she was needy for a solution, just as all people are today. Jesus highlighted her need, telling her that if she knew what water He was able to offer, she would beg Him for a drink.

All of us are thirsty, longing for something that will satisfy us completely. We often try to satisfy that thirst with sin, either with things that are inherently sinful or with things that become sinful when we put them in the place of God in our lives. How we each try to satisfy our thirst looks different from person to person. But the need is the same in every circumstance; we are in need of Jesus and connection with Him to fulfill our deepest longings.

- **What are some of the ways we are tempted to fill the longing in our hearts with things other than God?**

Loving your enemies certainly doesn't come naturally or easily. Fortunately for us, God loves His enemies. Though we have made ourselves His enemies through sin, He chooses to love us anyways and works toward our reconciliation, the restoration of our relationship with Him. While we turned our back toward God, He remained facing us, pursuing us, and reaching out to us. He loves us so much that He made a way for us to receive the living water we so desperately need.

What exactly is that living water? The gift of the Holy Spirit, who grants eternal life to those in whom He dwells. Jesus made this gift possible for us, His enemies, by His death on the cross in our place. Jesus paves the way for abundant life in the Spirit for all those who recognize their need for His salvation and draw near to Him in faith.

- **How should receiving the gift of living water from Jesus change one's life?**

Read John 4:19-24.

Debates about the "proper" way to worship are familiar to most of us. People have opinions about what time church services should start, how long they should be, what ministries should be available, which Bible translation churches should use, what styles of music are appropriate, what types of dress are acceptable, whether there should be chairs or pews, even what color the carpet should be. Opinions are fine to have, but if we are not careful, our personal preferences about the physical spaces in which we worship can override our understanding of biblical worship.

The Bible makes it clear that our physical spaces of worship are not in need of perfection, nor are they even essential. Jesus pointed out to the Samaritan woman that the time had come when the physical space she worshiped in would not matter. In her case, the debate was whether God should be worshiped on Mount Gerizim, as the Samaritans believed, or on Mount Moriah, as the Jews believed. Jesus issued the surprising statement that worship no longer needed to be defined by geographical boundaries.

Rather, what is important about worship is that it is done in Spirit and truth. Because God is spirit, a nonmaterial, divine being, so must our worship be in spirit, specifically in the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of truth (John 15:26).

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
God's people worship in Spirit and in truth.

John 4

1-6. The story of Jesus' interaction with the woman at the well began with a couple of geographical details. These details are essential to understanding the dynamics of the conversation about to take place.

The route Jesus selected to travel from Judea to Galilee was quick, but not common. It took Him through Samaria, an area that most Jews would avoid. The Samaritans were considered "half-breeds" whose forefathers were Jewish but had intermarried with Assyrians. A result of their history, they were despised by many Jews.

Jesus rejected the culturally acceptable route that went around the Samaritans. Instead, He took the direct route, and this decision placed Him at Jacob's well around noontime, when the social outcasts came to draw water.

7-14. This dialogue occurred between Jesus and a woman who was likely considered a social outcast. Jesus initiated the conversation when He asked for a drink of water. In Jesus' day, this conversation was taboo. A teacher of the law or a Rabbi would avoid talking to a woman, especially one from this ethnic background and with this social history.

The woman's response included an element of surprise. Don't you realize I'm a Samaritan? She saw herself as "out-of-bounds" and "cast out" by the Jews, and perhaps devalued because of her ethnicity.

But Jesus advanced the conversation in a way that implied this conversation was God's gift to her. He steered their discussion about water to the need for living water only God can offer—the gift of salvation, the gift of God Himself through the work of Jesus the Son and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. To a woman whose soul longed for satisfaction, Jesus spoke of living water that would quench spiritual thirst.

99 Essential Doctrines (p. 112, DDG)

Christ as Reconciliation

Ever since the fall of the first man and woman in the garden of Eden, God and human beings have been estranged. Sin resulted not only in an estranged relationship with God but also in enmity between God and humanity. Sin is an infinite offense against an infinite God. Thankfully, God loves His enemies and has sent Christ to be the reconciler between us and God. Through Christ's death, God provides the means whereby that broken relationship is restored and renewed (Rom. 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:18-19).

TEACHING PLAN

- **What should our churches look like if we are worshiping in Spirit and truth?**
- **Jesus taught that worship isn't tied to a place, but is something first and foremost of the heart. Why is this important in our daily lives? How can we apply this when attending church?**

Read John 4:25-26,28-29,39.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus was hesitant to proclaim His identity outright when traveling and teaching amongst the Jews. He likely wanted to avoid the political and military baggage many Jews had attached to their expectation for the Messiah. With the Samaritan woman, however, Jesus came right out and said it. He could not have been any clearer—Jesus is the long-anticipated Messiah, the promised One come to save His people.

As the Messiah, Jesus accomplished the work of reconciling us to God. He is the sacrificial Lamb who takes away the sin of the world, the means by which our broken relationship with God is restored and renewed (John 1:29). It is His perfect righteousness that is presented to the Father on our behalf for our justification. He is the triumphant King who delivers His people and restores all of creation. If we trust that Jesus is who He says He is, then He is our salvation.

When the Samaritan woman learned of Jesus' identity as the Messiah, she went back to her town and shared with her people. Since the woman came to the well in the heat of the day (John 4:6-7), when other women were unlikely to be there, it is probable that she was some kind of a social outcast, perhaps because of her history with men (John 4:16-18). But she did not let that stop her from being an evangelist. Such was her excitement that she told everyone about Jesus, wondering "Could this be the Messiah?" Through sharing the testimony of her encounter with Jesus, many of the Samaritans believed in Him (John 4:39-42). Her story drew others to His side.

Today, our testimonies can work in the same way. Sharing with our neighbors about the ways Christ has worked in our lives and spreading the news that He is the Messiah invites people to come to Him themselves. Encountering Jesus as the Messiah ought to inspire us to tell others about Him. We shouldn't be able to resist telling our neighbors about Him anymore than we can resist sharing when we've just aced a final exam or when we've won a free car or when a loved one is finally cancer-free. And we shouldn't want to resist telling people. Jesus is the Messiah—this is amazing news!

Often, instead of yielding to the Holy Spirit as He leads our hearts to share Jesus with others, we enter into a battle with Him over control in our lives, over our social standing, reputation, status, and dignity. The good news is Jesus still wants to meet us there in His loving-kindness that leads us to repentance so our lives can echo again His glory to those around us.

- **How does the Samaritan woman's response challenge us when it comes to pointing others to Jesus?**

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
God's people worship in Spirit and in truth.

John 4

19-24. We are only able to worship because of Jesus and what He accomplished on the cross. Though the Samaritan woman did not yet recognize it, Jesus wasn't just a prophet—Jesus is the Prophet. The Jews and Samaritans were expecting the arrival of a prophet who would be like Moses and who would answer all their questions. But Jesus exceeded these expectations. As God's Son, He possesses the knowledge, wisdom, and authority of God to respond to every situation and longing of the human heart. He also was able to make atonement for people's sin once and for all, thereby forging the path for them to enter into true worship of an everlasting communion with the one true God.

Activity

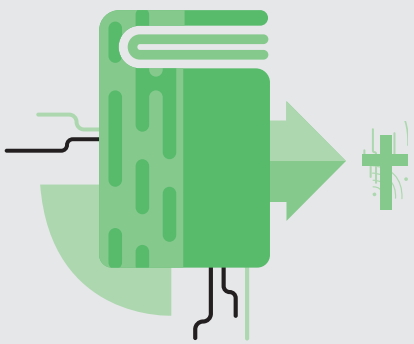
Your students will take points from the lesson and make it into a logo, slogan, or jingle. Imagine that the church wanted to start a public media campaign to the surrounding community focusing on these three aspects of Jesus (water that brings satisfaction, prophet who enables true worship, Messiah who brings salvation). Alone or in pairs, students should (on paper) design a logo that could be made into stickers or put on a billboard or other media. If they don't want to draw a logo, they could come up with a short slogan or jingle to emphasize the point (e.g., "Jesus' water satisfies" to the same tune as the "Nationwide is on your side" jingle). Note: chances are good most of your students will choose the water point, since it's fairly easy to draw. If you want them to cover the other two as well, you could assign points to the groups, or have them count off by threes.

As they prepare their logos or slogans, they should keep two considerations in mind. First, they should think of their target audience. For instance, if they wanted to target gamers, they might make their logo look like a video game power up item; if they wanted to reach families, they might have a logo that somehow incorporated parents and children. Second, they should think of how someone could use their logo or slogan as a conversation piece to connect with a non-believer and show that person how great Jesus is.

Give students some time to prepare their logos and slogans; then let them share. Give particular attention to the people they are trying to reach and to how they would suggest using this logo or slogan to initiate conversation to better people's lives with Jesus.

(p. 113, DDG) Christ Connection

Jesus told the Samaritan woman that a day was coming when worshipers would not focus on the physical location of their worship but would worship God in Spirit and truth. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, our worship is no longer confined by geography. We worship Jesus as the Savior of the whole world wherever we are.



JESUS TEACHES ABOUT LIVING WATER

John 4:7–14, 19–26, 28–29, 39

JESUS TEACHES ABOUT LIVING WATER

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JESUS CONNECTION

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LIFEWISE QUALITY

LOVE – Choosing to support and care for others whether or not they deserve it.

HEAD

Why was the Samaritan woman surprised that Jesus spoke with her and asked her for a drink?

What was the living water that Jesus offered the Samaritan woman?

HEART

Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman shows how God's love reaches across cultural, relational and spiritual lines to those who need it most. Like us, this woman didn't deserve Jesus' love, but He gave it to her willingly anyway. Think about a time that you saw someone show this kind of love to you or another person. How would you describe this kind of love?

Romans 5:6–10 says, "For while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. For rarely will someone die for a just person—though for a good person perhaps someone might even dare to die. But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

How does the fact that Jesus died for you when you were His enemy encourage you to love others who don't deserve it?

HANDS

Name two types of people that you have a difficult time getting along with or understanding. List two ways that you can show support and care for each type of person. Then, ask God to help you demonstrate His love to these people in the next week.